

THE IRRESISTIBLE MAN—A Study of Human Nature.

By Lilian Bell.

TO other men the Irresistible Man too often means the man who publicly ogles women. That is because men can see him. But to women what we can see forms but a small portion of our lives. We hear more than we see, and feel more than we hear. George Eliot says: "The best of us go about well wadded with stupidity, otherwise we should die of the roar that lies on the other side of Silence."

But men have to see things, and they can always see the ogling man, and he always makes them perfectly furious. Queer, isn't it, when the Simon Tappertits of this life are the least of the men who bore us? In fact, I never should have thought of him if some man had not reminded me to mention him. But while I occasionally have been honored by the exertions of one of these insects to attract my attention, thereby proving that I am a woman, I can honestly say that I never remember seeing one. Women who are capable of being really bored never even see such men—any more than if you were being roasted alive, you would care if a hairpin pulled.

I often have wished that men could know each other as women know them. I often wish men could hear how their best friends talk and act with women. How would it strike men, I wonder, to know that a man who knew so well how to behave with men that he had been known publicly to reprimand another man for mentioning a woman's name before a party of men at the club—how would it strike these men, who applauded his action there, to hear him relate to a party of women how he helped a man friend out in his love affair with an unwilling girl by stepping in and getting the girl wildly in love with himself and then publicly dropping her, so that in her mortification she gladly turned to and married her old lover?

Now that man is considered the acme of all that is fine and high-minded among men. We women know him to be vain of his prowess among girls, and we consider him a type of the Irresistible Man.

It is a mistake to confound the Irresistible Man with the fool. Neither is he stupid. Very often he is a man of no small amount of brain. He is, of course, always conceited, and generally, though not always, handsome. He thinks he is, however. I am not describing the soft, sapient, pretty man who lisps, nor the weak-kneed young gentleman with pink cheeks who sings tenor. Far worse. The Irresistible Man, as we know him, is often a man who is doing a man's work in the world, and doing it well. He is frequently a man of character, but through that character runs this strange, irritating thread of conceit, which blinds our eyes to whatever of real worth may be within because of his exasperatingly confident exterior.

We should brush him aside as carelessly as if he were a fly should there be nothing to him worth hating. But the maddening part of it to us is that the Irresistible Man is worth saving, only he won't be saved. He thinks he is perfect. If he could get our point of view, and let some woman take a hand at him, she might make a man of him. But, bless your soul, the Irresistible Man is in this world to give pointers—not to take them!

A queer thing about this particular kind of the Irresistible Man, who is prevalent enough to be considered a type, is that he nearly always has grown up in a small town, and has only come to the city because his village got too small for his talents. That of itself explains his whole attitude toward the world. Having probably been the "show pupil" at school, having taken prizes and ranked first among his fellows until he was twenty-one, he brings that confident attitude with him and plants himself in the heart of the great city, like Ajax defying the lightning, without the thought that changed environments might demand change of conduct as well as change in clothes.

Doubtless the whole town helped to spoil him. Doubtless he has heard all his life that the town was too small for him, and that a man like himself ought to go to the city where there would be a market for his talents. Doubtless he has conquered the hearts of all the village maidens, therefore he expects the same arts to win among city girls. This system of easy victory and of yearning for other worlds to conquer, instead of making him fit himself for a larger field, has, on account of this absurd fault of irresistibility, only made him superficial. His crudeness is to the initiated almost pitiful. Never having been obliged to work for pre-eminence, he decries exertion, and never

admits that he has to try hard to win anything. His cheap little accomplishments of singing—badly—possibly of reciting dialect with realistic effects—he is accustomed to say he "just picked up." I often have thought he must have picked them up after somebody else had thrown them away. But they have been efficacious in his town, and in a larger field, with foemen more worthy of his steel, they are intended to enslave.

The Irresistible Man is almost too pitiful to laugh at with any degree of comfort. The pathos of the situation is almost too apparent. That is one reason why he is allowed to go on as he is. It is why no one has the heart to try to correct him. What can you say to a man whose confidence in his powers to please you is such that at parting he says, "I cannot spare you another evening this week, but I'll come next Thursday if I can. Don't expect me, however, until I let you know, and don't be disappointed if you find that I can't come at all."

To be sure, you haven't asked him to repeat his visit in any event. To be sure, you have nearly died during this one which is just over. But what are you going to do? We have a white bulldog whose confident attitude toward the world is quite like that of the Irresistible Man. Jack blunders in where nobody wants him, and puts his great heavy paw on our best gowns, and scratches at the door when we want to sleep, and gets under our feet when we are trying to catch a train, and makes a nuisance of himself generally. But he is so sure that we love him that we haven't the heart to turn him out of doors. We simply stand him, because he is a dumb brute who is so used to being loved that everybody puts up with him, and nobody tries to improve him or teach him better manners.

Confidence is a beautiful thing. But it is also one of the most delicate, and requires the daintiest handling. The man who is confident with women must be very sure of a personal magnetism or of sufficient merit to insure success, otherwise his confidence will prove the flattest of failures. The only difference between the Irresistible Man who bores us to death, and the Successful Man, who is so fascinating that he cannot come too often, is that one has confidence with nothing to base it on, and the other bases his confidence on fact.

Women are not looking for flaws in men. They are only too anxious to make the best of sorry specimens, and to shut their eyes to faults and to coax virtues into prominence. Men

have nothing to complain of in the way women in society treat them. They get much better than they deserve, and much better than they give. So all they will have to do to win a still better opinion is to deserve it, and if they make ever so slight an advance they will see that they are met more than half way by even most captious critics of their acquaintance.

Adaptability is a heaven-sent gift. It is like the straw used in packing china. It not only saves jarring, but it prevents worse disasters, and without it a man is only safe when he is alone. The moment he comes into smart contact with his fellow-beings there is a crash, and the assembled company have a vision of broken fragments of humanity, which might have remained whole and suffered no more injury than a possible nick had the combatants been padded with adaptability. The Irresistible Man is the man who thinks he can get through the world without it. The Irresistible Man is the one who is so perfect in his own estimation that he needs no change. He is beyond human help. Try Christian Science.

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Two of the most successful American writers of newspaper advertisements are Miss Mamie Hungerford and Miss Nellie Riordan, of Washington. Both started as typewriters, but by close application and studying the methods of advertisers and reading all the various advertising journals, they rapidly developed into advertisement writers, and manage their own lists of houses.

A Russian baptism under the ritual of the Greek Church is a curious ceremony. A large wooden bowl is filled with water, and the priest takes the child in his arms, stuffs wadding into its ears and nostrils, and then plunges the little head under the water three times, during which period he repeats prayers for the imperial family.

